

Remarks

This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on August 20, 2007. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 29, 37, 39, 40, and 46. In this paper, claim 41 is being cancelled, claim 42 is being rewritten in independent form, and claim 37 is being amended. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 24-40 and 42-46.

In the Office Action, claims 24-28, 30-36, 38, and 41-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by EP 1 239 027. Reference EP 1 238 927 discloses a chain formed from U-shaped chain links. Each chain link is connected to a successive link by a shaft pin extending through the vertex of one chain link and the legs of a successive chain link. The shaft pin also extends through a bearing block received in the vertex of the one chain link.

The claims of the present application are directed at a conveyor mat. The claimed conveyor mat includes modules having a row of projections at a front and rear side of each module. The projections define recesses therebetween and include hinge holes. The hinge holes of a row receive a hinge pin to couple adjacent modules together. An intermediate element is provided with the rows of projections to absorb the increased load incurred during negotiation of a bend.

Reference EP 1 238 927 fails to disclose all of the elements of the claims in the present application, and thus cannot anticipate the rejected claims. In particular, the cited reference does not disclose nor suggest a row of projections provided with hinge holes at a front and rear side of each module, as required in claims 24 and 41 of the present application. Moreover, the cited reference does not disclose or suggest recesses at the front and rear side of a module which receive projections of adjoining modules, as required in claim 24.

The bearing block provided with the chain disclosed in EP 1 238 927 is the sole means for transmitting loads along the chain, and is not provided to augment other force transmission structure, such as the rows of projections recited in the claims of the present application. Accordingly, absent impermissible hindsight reconstruction, there is no reason to combine a bearing block as disclosed in EP 1 238 927 with a conveyor mat

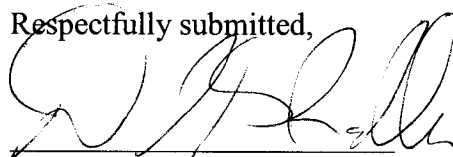
having rows of projections provided with hinge holes at a front and rear side of a module. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that all of the claims of the present application are allowable as filed. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 24-28, 30-36, 38, and 41-45 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

In the Office Action, claims 29, 37, 39, 40, and 46 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the above remarks, Applicant declines to rewrite any of these claims in independent form.

Finally claim 37 is being amended to correct an error and claim 42 is being rewritten in independent form to claim a preferred embodiment of Applicant's invention. Claim 41 is being cancelled.

In view of the above remarks, cancellation of claim 41, and amendment to claims 37 and 42, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 24-40 and 42-46. No additional fees for filing this response are believed to be due. However, if additional fees are due, including any fees for an extension of time to respond, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to deposit account no. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,



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